



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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District of Arizona*

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## **PHOENIX BUSINESSMAN SENTENCED ON TAX AND MONEY LAUNDERING CHARGES**

PHOENIX – U.S. District Judge James A. Teilborg sentenced Jeffrey A. Meranto, 52, of Phoenix, today to 37 months in federal prison. The Court also ordered Meranto to pay restitution to the U.S. Treasury for back taxes for the years 1998-2000, in addition to interest and penalties, in a total amount of \$275,292. Meranto had pleaded guilty on September 7, 2006 to one count of Subscribing to a False Return and one count of Engaging in Monetary Transactions in Property Derived from Specified Unlawful Activities.

In his plea agreement, Meranto admitted that he under-reported income to the Internal Revenue Service and that he laundered the proceeds of a marijuana trafficking operation through his business, A-1 Motorsports. In particular, on or around June 19, 2000, Meranto transferred \$46,000 from A-1 Motorsports to First American Title Insurance Company for the purchase of land in Scottsdale, Ariz., knowing that these were the unlawful proceeds from the possession of marijuana for sale. Meranto also acknowledged that on or around October 19, 2000, he signed a 1998 calendar year tax return and submitted it to the IRS stating his total income for that year was \$9,372.00 when in fact he knew he had actually earned \$66,797.26.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by special agents of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

The prosecution is being handled by Gary M. Restaino, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-447-001-PHX-JAT  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-184(Meranto)

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